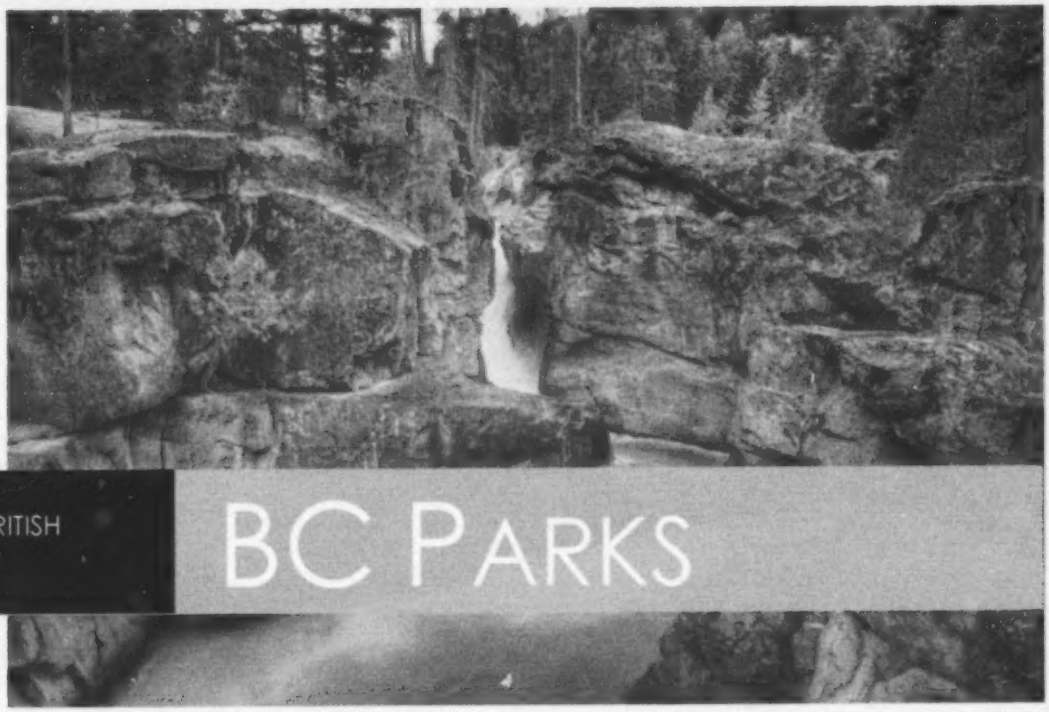


PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC PARKS

2013/14 Annual Report

BRITISH COLUMBIA | BC Parks

Cover photo: Nairn Falls – located in the Pemberton Valley just north of Whistler, the wheelchair accessible park was established in 1966 protecting 170 hectares of mixed forest consisting of western hemlock, western red cedar, coastal Douglas-fir and the western flowering pacific dogwood.

Table of Contents

About BC Parks 1

Managing the System **3**

- Legislative Framework 3
- Designations and Changes to the System 4
- Land Acquisitions 5
- Management Planning 6

Conservation Management **10**

- Ecological Integrity 10
- Climate Change 11
- Monitoring 12
- Invasive Species Management 13

Shared Stewardship **14**

- Volunteers 14
- Partnerships and Donations 17
- Park Facility Operators 19
- Engaging First Nations 20

Visitor Experiences **20**

- BC Parks Reservation Service 22
- Attendance 23
- Visitor Satisfaction 25
- Improving Visitor Facilities 26
- Public Safety 28

Engaging the Public **30**

- Community Engagement 30
- BC Parks Website 33

Economic and Financial Benefits **35**

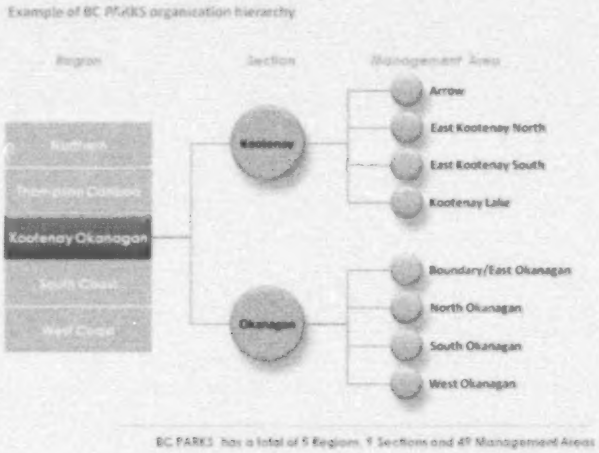
- Revenues and Operating Expenditures 35
- Economic Benefits 37

About BC Parks

British Columbia's protected areas system is a public trust with exceptional opportunities for conservation, outdoor recreation, education, scientific study and social interactions.

Who we are

BC Parks is part of the Ministry of Environment. BC Parks' services and management are delivered through a headquarters office in Victoria and five regional offices located throughout the province. The regions are subdivided into nine sections. The sections are further sub-divided into 49 management areas.



Most on-the-ground facilities and services are managed by contractors, called Park Facility Operators (PFOs). Some Park Facility Operators manage one park and others manage a grouping or bundle of parks in a specific location. Park Facility Operators provide onsite management, service and routine maintenance in day use areas and campgrounds. Standards for this service are set by BC Parks.

What we manage

British Columbia's protected areas system provides for the protection and maintenance of important natural and cultural values and outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities.

Protected areas contain some of the best representative elements of British Columbia's natural and cultural heritage. They include ecological reserves; provincial parks; conservancies; recreation areas; and protected areas established under the *Environment and Land Use Act*.

As of March 31, 2014, the system managed by BC Parks included 1,030 protected lands, covering approximately 14.4 percent of the province or approximately 14 million hectares. British Columbia's protected areas system is one of the largest protected areas systems in North America and one of the largest provincial/territorial systems in Canada.

Protected Areas System Administered by BC Parks (as of March 31, 2014)

Designation	Number	Area (hectares)
Ecological Reserves	148	160,452
Class A Parks	627	10,489,716
Class B Parks	2	3,778
Class C Parks	14	495
Conservancies	156	2,998,507
Environment and Land Act designations	80	385,402
Recreation Areas	3	5,929
Total	**1030**	**14,044,279**

What are...?

Ecological reserves are reserved for ecological purposes including areas: for research and education; that maintain representative examples of natural ecosystems; that serve as examples of ecosystems modified by human activities and offer an opportunity to study their recovery; that protect rare or endangered flora and fauna; and, unique examples of botanical, zoological or geological phenomena. While most ecological reserves are open to the public, they are not established for outdoor recreation and no extractive activities are allowed.

Class A parks are lands dedicated to the preservation of their natural environment for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public. Development in a Class A park is limited to that which is necessary for the maintenance of its recreational values. Activities such as grazing, hay cutting and other uses (except commercial logging, mining or hydroelectric development) that existed at the time the park was established may be allowed to continue in certain parks.

Class B parks differ from Class A parks in that a Class B park may permit a broader range of activities and uses provided that such uses are not detrimental to the recreational values of the park.

Class C parks differ from Class A parks in that a Class C park must be managed by a local board. They are generally small parks providing local recreational amenities.

Conservancies are set aside for: (a) the protection and maintenance of their biological diversity and natural environments; (b) the preservation and maintenance of social, ceremonial and cultural uses of First Nations; (c) the protection and maintenance of their recreational values; and (d) development or use of natural resources in a manner consistent with the purposes of (a), (b) and (c) above. Conservancies provide for a wider range of low impact, compatible economic opportunities than Class A parks, however, commercial logging, mining and hydroelectric power generation, other than local run-of-the-river projects, are prohibited.

Protected areas are established by order in council under the *Environment and Land Use Act* and generally have one or more existing or proposed activities that are not usually allowed in a park (e.g., proposed industrial road, pipeline, transmission line or communication site). Allowable activities are determined by specific provisions when the area is established as well as relevant sections of the *Park Act* and regulations.

Recreation areas are set aside for public recreational use. The majority of these areas were established to allow a mineral resource evaluation under a time-limited tenure; no other industrial activities are permitted. All current recreation areas are being evaluated to determine if they should become fully protected or returned to integrated resource management lands.

Managing the System

Legislative Framework

The provincial protected areas system is governed by several pieces of legislation.

Ecological Reserve Act

This Act provides for the establishment and administration of ecological reserves. Ecological reserves are established by inclusion to the schedules of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act* or by order in council under the Act.

Park Act

This Act provides for the establishment, classification and management of parks, conservancies and recreation areas. Class A parks and conservancies are established by inclusion in the schedules to the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act* or by order in council under the Act. Class B and C parks and recreation areas are established by order in council under the Act.

Protected Areas of British Columbia Act

This Act consolidates in its schedules most of the Class A parks, conservancies and ecological reserves for the purposes of the *Park Act* and the *Ecological Reserve Act*. The Act ensures that the boundaries of these areas cannot be modified to remove lands except by an Act of the Legislature.

Environment and Land Use Act

This Act empowers a Land Use Committee of Cabinet to ensure all aspects of the preservation and maintenance of the natural environment are fully considered in the administration of land use and resource development. Orders can be made respecting the environment or land use, including the establishment of protected areas. The Act is under the administration of the Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations.

Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing Act

Only sections 5(b), and 6 and 9 relate to the portfolio of the Minister of Environment. Section 5(b) describes one of the functions of the Ministry as being to encourage outdoor recreation, establish parks and conserve the natural scenic and historic features of British Columbia. Section 6 provides the Minister with the authority, for the purposes of the Act, to enter into agreements (subject to the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council) with the Government of Canada, the government of another province, or with any other person or a municipality. Section 9 gives authority to the minister to dispose of, acquire and manage land for ministry purposes.

Ministry of Environment Act

This Act gives the Minister authority to acquire property and to enter into agreements with other governments with the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Special Accounts Appropriation and Control Act

This Act establishes special accounts, which are accounts in the general fund of the consolidated revenue fund where the authorization to expend money from the account is located in an Act other than a *Supply Act*. Section 9.6 of the Act deals with the Park Enhancement Fund. This section details what monies can be added to the special account and how the monies can be used by the Minister of Environment to enhance volunteer, research and other opportunities in parks and protected areas.

Designations and Changes to the System

Changes to British Columbia's protected areas system continue the ongoing process of designing and implementing a system that provides for improved protection of environmental and cultural values, providing recreational experiences and providing economic opportunities to communities.

In 2013/14, the Province added 1,384 hectares to British Columbia's protected areas system by adding

Lac du Bois Grasslands Protected Area

lands to Lac du Bois Grasslands Protected Area. Approximately 1,330 hectares of Crown lands were added to the protected area to protect a continuous area of relatively undisturbed grassland ecosystem and associated critical wildlife habitat recommended in the Kamloops Land and Resource Management Plan for this area. In addition, 54 hectares of six small Crown land parcels were added to Lac du Bois Grasslands Protected Area, fulfilling the original intent from the Kamloops Land and Resource Management Plan to include these lands in the protected area.

Land Acquisitions

From time to time, the provincial government acquires lands for protected areas through purchase, donation and/or exchange to fill key gaps in the protected areas system. Solutions that include partnerships contribute to successful projects.

In 2013/14, 504 hectares of lands were acquired for protected area purposes. This includes 395 hectares of land valued at $5,850,000 located at the north end of Quadra Island between Small Inlet Marine and Octopus Islands Marine provincial parks. It also includes 109 hectares of land on Galiano Island valued at $475,000 which is to be added to Bodega Ridge Park.

Land Acquisitions	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Land purchase value	*$7,390,000*	*$65,000*	*$6,325,000*

Success Story: Expansion of Quadra Island Parks

Partnering with several groups, BC Parks acquired almost 400 hectares of private property on Quadra Island, linking two provincial parks to further protect unique and sensitive ecosystems.

Octopus Islands Marine Park

As a result, Small Inlet Marine and Octopus Islands provincial parks are connected, ensuring that wildlife can move freely between the north and south parts of Quadra Island. With numerous bays and small islands, these parks serve as habitat for a host of marine life including salmon, harbour seals, porpoises and octopi. The acquisition also improves access for recreational opportunities including boating, kayaking, fishing, wilderness camping and hiking. Important archaeological sites and a historic portage route will be protected.

This was a complex transaction to acquire the lands for $5.85 million. A number of partners were involved including:

- Merrill & Ring Forestry L.P. ($350,000)
- BC Marine Parks Forever Society ($433,000)
- Quadra Island Conservancy and Stewardship Society and Save the Heart of Quadra Parks ($200,000)
- Vancity Community Foundation, supported by Vancity Credit Union, provided $186,940 and acquired the rights to carbon offsets resulting from the protection of the lands.

To complete the transaction, the Province provided cash and two parcels of land on nearby East Thurlow Island through a land exchange with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations with a total contribution of $2.7 million. Merrill & Ring owned the land between Small Inlet Marine and Octopus Islands provincial parks since the late 1800's. The lands were first identified for protection by the Province in 1996.

Management Planning

A management plan is the most important document for a protected area. The management plan sets out the high-level framework from which all subsequent protected area management, planning and implementation will take place.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Percentage of protected areas with valid approved management plans	*68%*	*67%*	*70%*

What it means:

In 2013/14, nine management plans were approved. Seventy percent of BC's protected areas now have valid management direction. This is an increase of 3% from the 2012/13 Final Report., which is primarily due to a province-wide management plan assessment project conducted from May to October 2013. This project ensured that all existing management plans had been assessed within the past five years and clarified the process for determining the validity and adequacy of the existing approved management plans. The project resulted in more reliable baseline data on which to base management plan reports and subsequent internal assessments of management plans.

How it's measured:

Only 'valid' management plans are included. Management plans are considered to be 'valid' if the management plan still provides adequate strategic direction and guidance for the management of a protected area.

Management plans were approved for five small protected areas in the Thompson area: Yard Creek, Roche Lake, Anstey Hunakwa, Pillar and White Lake parks.

- A management plan was approved for Golden Ears Park in the Lower Mainland.

- Management plans were approved for Wap Creek and Dennison-Bonneau parks in the North Okanagan.
- A management plan was approved for Kikomun Creek Park in the East Kootenays.
- Management plan amendments were approved for Finn Creek Park and Garibaldi Park.

There were also nine draft management plans released for public review through the BC Parks website. All management planning processes include a minimum of a 30-day web-based public review of the draft management plan.

Management Plan Policy

The *Strategic Management Planning Policy for Ecological Reserves, Parks, Conservancies, Protected Areas and Recreation Areas* was approved in July 2013. This policy requires that a management plan be prepared and kept current for every protected area in the BC Parks' system. The percent of protected areas with approved management plans is a performance measure that is reported on annually.

Tools to Assist Management Planning

Several management planning tools are now available to assist BC Parks planners, planning teams and partners to develop consistent and high quality protected area management plans.

The toolkit includes four guidelines and three templates:

- BC Parks Protected Area Management Planning Manual;
- BC Parks Guide to Writing Management Plans;
- BC Parks Management Plan Review and Approval Guide;
- Zoning Framework;
- BC Parks Management Plan Template;
- BC Parks Management Plan Amendment Template; and
- Management Planning Project Plan Template

Management Plans Approved in 2013/14	***Protected Areas***
Wap Creek Park	Wap Creek Park
Denison-Bonneau Park	Denison-Bonneau Park
Kikomun Creek Park	Kikomun Creek Park
Golden Ears Park	Golden Ears Park
Pillar Park	Pillar Park
White Lake Park	White Lake Park
Anstey Hunakwa Park	Anstey Hunakwa Park
Roche Lake Park	Roche Lake Park
Yard Creek Park	Yard Creek Park

Management Plan Amendments Approved in 2013/14	Amendments
Garibaldi Park (Management Plan Amendment)	Amendments to the direction for the Spearhead Area of the park
Finn Creek Park (Management Plan Amendment)	Amendments to the direction for snowmobiling in the park.

Success Story: Golden Ears Management Plan

Golden Ears Park encompasses over 62,500 hectares, sits in close proximity to the Metro Vancouver area, and is one of British Columbia's most popular provincial parks with an average attendance of over 615,000 visitors annually. In 2013, a management planning process was completed for Golden Ears Park, which received input from local First Nations, stakeholders and the public.

Golden Ears Park is a unique and significant park in British Columbia, balancing a high rate of visitors (with over 450 vehicle accessible campsites, it is one of the largest and most popular campgrounds in the province), with its important role in providing habitat for a diversity of wildlife, including Roosevelt elk and grizzly bear in the northern sections of the park. Golden Ears is part of a protected area complex, which includes Garibaldi Park to the north and Pinecone Burke Park to the west, together creating a large expanse of connected protected wilderness totaling 2,875 square kilometres.

Golden Ears Park

The area also has significance to the Katzie First Nation who for thousands of years maintained villages, seasonal hunting, trapping, gathering and fishing encampments and sacred sites in and around Golden Ears.

During the management planning process, workshops and open houses were held and a draft plan was posted for public comment on the BC Parks website. The high degree of public engagement in the planning process led to a final management plan that provides long-term management strategies that recognize and enhance the park's significant cultural and natural values while reflecting the aspirations and interests of those who enjoy and recreate in the park.

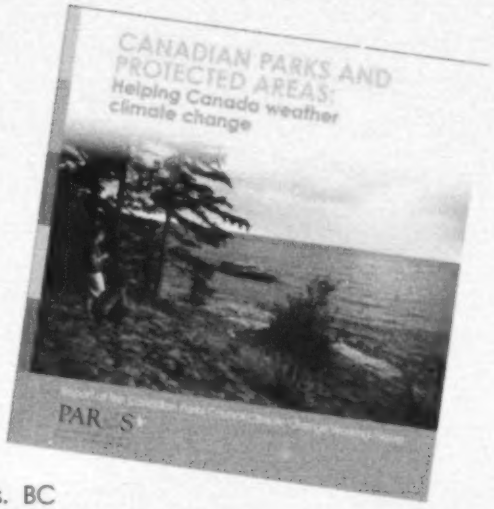
Intergovernmental Relations

BC Parks works with federal, territorial and provincial governments on areas of mutual interest in the planning and management of protected areas.

Canadian Parks Council

The Canadian Parks Council (CPC) is an organization consisting of senior managers representing Canada's national, provincial and territorial parks agencies. It provides a Canada-wide forum for inter-governmental information sharing and action on protected areas that:

- promotes excellence in protected areas planning and management;
- advocates protected areas values and interests; and
- encourages cooperation and provides support to member agencies on parks and protected areas issues and initiatives.



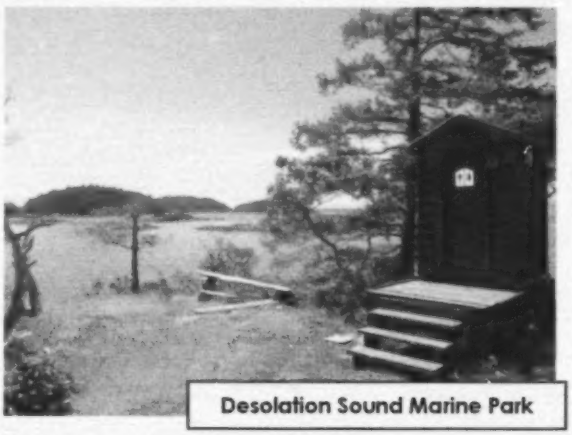
Two key initiatives occurred in 2013/14. First, the CPC published a study that focuses on the important role of protected areas in helping Canada adapt to climate change. The publication covers protecting safe havens, working with partners across the landscape, protecting ecosystem services, supporting healthy communities, building knowledge and inspiring Canadians. BC Parks contributed to the publication, which is available on the CPC website: http://www.parks-arcs.ca/english/CPC%20Climate%20Change%20Report%20FINAL%20engLR.pdf

Second, Ministers responsible for parks and protected areas met and committed to work together to creatively and collaboratively inspire Canadians to experience nature through parks in ways that support their health and well-being. The action was prompted by the first-ever comprehensive evidence-based report in Canada that chronicles the many proven benefits of spending time in nature.

Developed by the CPC, *Connecting Canadians with Nature: An Investment in the Well-being of our Citizens* pulls together an increasing body of research that demonstrates the immense benefits of connecting with the natural world. More information: http://www.parks-parcs.ca/english/cpc/publications.php

Marine Protected Areas

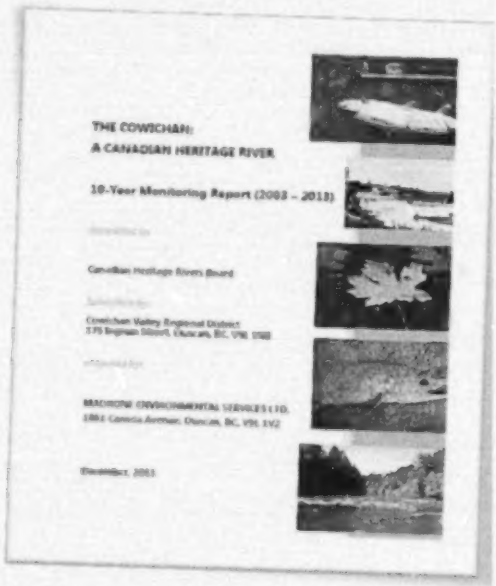
BC Parks works with other provincial agencies and the federal government on marine protected areas establishment, including proposals for a National Marine Conservation Area Reserve in the southern Strait of Georgia (Parks Canada), a National Marine Wildlife Management Area around the Scott Islands (Canadian Wildlife Service), a Marine Protected Area in Hecate Strait/Queen Charlotte Sound for glass sponge reefs (Department of Fisheries and Oceans), a Marine Protected



Desolation Sound Marine Park

Area at Race Rocks, offshore from Victoria (Department of Fisheries and Oceans), and the Marine Planning Partnership for the North Pacific Coast (Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations). These proposals are at various stages of development, but all of them require cooperation between provincial agencies and federal government departments.

Canadian Heritage Rivers



Representing British Columbia, BC Parks participates in the Canadian Heritage Rivers program, which recognizes Canada's outstanding examples of river heritage. Three rivers in British Columbia are designated as Canadian Heritage Rivers: the Fraser, the Cowichan and the Kicking Horse.

Every ten years, a monitoring report must be completed for each Canadian heritage river. The intention of the monitoring report is to ensure a Canadian Heritage River continues to possess the outstanding values for which it was designated. This year, a decadal monitoring report for the Cowichan River was completed through a partnership that included a large number of government agencies and community stewardship organizations. The report found that the Cowichan continued to merit its status as a Canadian Heritage River. See the full report here: http://wwwd.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/heritage_rivers_program/reports/cowichan-rv-monitoring-report.pdf

Conservation Management

Ecological Integrity

Ecological integrity is an important concept that influences protected area management to ensure natural areas are well managed into the future.

BC Parks continues to be committed to the proactive stewardship of ecological integrity. At this time the performance measures focus on the consistent use of conservation and business process tools that have been provided to regional staff.

Ecological integrity occurs when an area or network of areas supports natural ecosystem composition, structure and function, and a capacity for self-renewal.

Ecological Integrity is a complex concept and difficult to measure directly. An assumption is made that the BC parks and protected areas system will be managed for ecological integrity when there is consistent application of conservation tools. Each of these tools interacts with the others, so without full use and understanding of the whole suite of tools, ecological integrity on the ground is at risk.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2012/13	2013/14
Percentage of BC Parks sections (9) that conducted annual management planning	*89*	*100*
Percentage of BC Parks sections (9) that supported the annual management planning process with the use of the Conservation Risk Assessment database	*78*	*89*
Percentage of BC Parks management areas (49) that updated information in the Conservation Risk Assessment database	*51*	*51*
Number of management areas (49) that added data to the Conservation Risk Assessment database	*33*	*33*

What it means:

BC Parks regional operations are subdivided into sections (9). The sections are further sub-divided into management areas (49). Annual management planning (AMPs) is a business process used to identify and prioritize work projects in a section or management area. AMPs have been standardized across the province and are now required to be completed annually. All sections conducted AMPs in 2013/14.

The Conservation Risk Assessment (CRA) is a database that catalogues the values and threats in each protected area in the province. It is used as input to many of the planning and evaluation processes in protected area management, including discussions that occur in the annual management planning process. Eighty-nine percent of the sections supported their AMPs with the use of the CRA database.

The CRA database is most effective when information is added or updated by regional staff on a continual basis. Thirty-three areas added data on special features and nine of those areas added more than ten entries. Combined, 51 percent of the management areas were updated with information in the CRA database.

Climate Change

British Columbia's protected areas system plays a key role in the province's response to climate change.

Climate-induced changes in protected areas are resulting from extreme weather events, droughts, flooding, insect outbreaks, invasive species, coastal erosion and wildfires. More subtle effects are occurring as a result of the gradual increase in temperature (especially in the winter) including shrinking glaciers, rising sea levels, changes to the water cycle and the movement of organisms. These changes, while not dramatic on a day-to-day basis, are affecting the distribution of species and the organization of ecosystems.

Great Glacier Park

An important focus of protected areas management in future years will be in maintaining functioning ecosystems and facilitating the movement of species within and across boundaries. Large landscape level processes have always played an

important role in sustaining ecosystems. These processes are now recognized as being critical in maintaining the resilience of the natural world. One of the key ways that BC's protected areas system can address these processes is by focussing on protecting large landscapes.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2012/13	2013/14
Percentage of **terrestrial** protected areas network* in large landscapes >2,700 km²	60	60
Percentage of **terrestrial** protected areas network in landscapes >1,000 km²	72	72
Percentage of **terrestrial** protected areas network in landscapes >500 km²	80	80

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2012/13	2013/14
Percentage of **nearshore** protected areas network in large landscapes >270 km²	57	57
Percentage of **nearshore** protected areas network in landscapes >100 km²	72	75
Percentage of **nearshore** protected areas network in landscapes >50 km²	79	81

*Protected areas network includes all provincially and federally designated protected areas.

What it means:

The terrestrial thresholds are based on work identifying minimum landscape areas to maintain mammals sensitive to disturbance. In nearshore ecosystems, research indicates that the optimal size of protected areas may be an order of magnitude less than in the terrestrial environment. In 2013/14, 62 percent of the protected areas in British Columbia are part of large protected landscapes.

Success Story: Landscape Level Conservation

Coastlines are especially vulnerable to climate change because sea level is expected to rise, and storm surges will increase in both frequency and intensity. BC Parks created a model of shoreline sensitivity to sea level rise and examined each coastal protected area to identify areas of high sensitivity. This knowledge will help guide and prioritize planning and management of protected areas along the coast. Landscape connections between intact natural areas within the province are also being studied to highlight locations where efforts should be focused to reconnect relatively intact natural areas, and provide movement opportunities for animals and plants. Both projects were done in collaboration with students at Vancouver Island University in Nanaimo, under the mentorship of BC Parks staff.

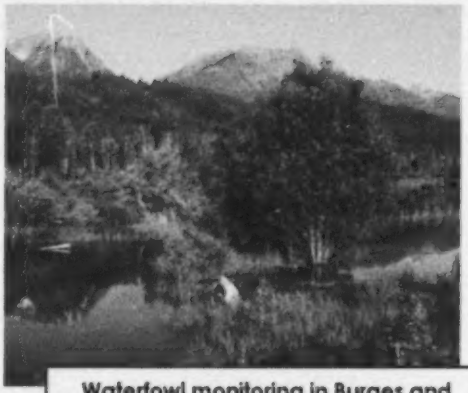
Monitoring

Monitoring is particularly important during a period of rapid change. It is difficult to predict exactly where and how fast changes are occurring. Monitoring the changes can help illustrate the rate and variability across the province.

Long-term Ecological Monitoring has begun in BC Parks. While, the monitoring framework identifies eight biomes that have associated data collection protocols, BC Parks is directly involved in setting up plots and collecting data in five biomes – alpine-subalpine, forest, grassland, wetland and intertidal. Using standardized protocols, each management area is engaged in setting up plots in two biomes, which will result in approximately 100 permanent plots

at full implementation. The program is based on the principles of citizen science and where applicable, volunteers are involved in the data collection.

So far, 26 of 49 management areas have at least one biome designated, while eight management areas have two biomes designated for data collection. In 2013/14, data was collected from a total of 30 sites.



Waterfowl monitoring in Burges and James Gadsden Park

Invasive Species Management

Invasive species are non-native species whose introduction into British Columbia causes economic or environmental damage or harm to human health.

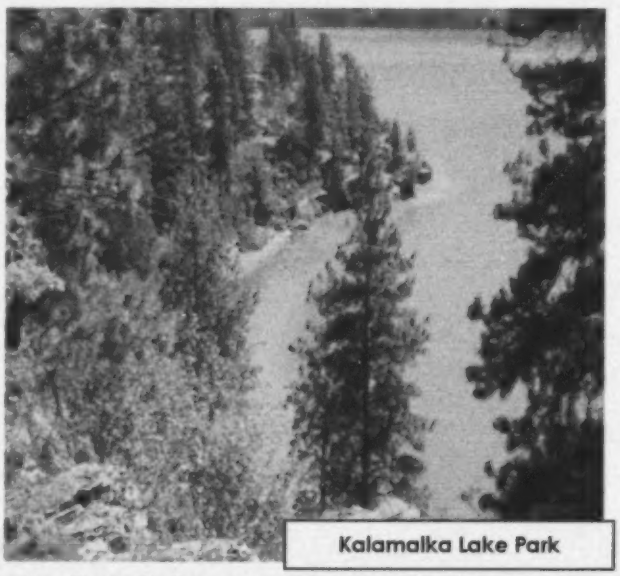
BC Parks Invasive Species Program

2013/14 Budget and Treatments

Budget	Treatments:	**BC Parks Budget:**	**$63,000**
		Park Enhancement Fund:	**$10,000**
	Total Budget:		$73,000

Success Story: Equipping Park Rangers to tackle invasive plants

Most invasive plant treatments in BC Parks are accomplished through manual removals (such as hand pulling) or biocontrol (using beneficial insects or bacteria). However, there are some invasive plants that require the use of pesticides to remove them. This year, two BC Parks rangers were trained and certified to be pesticide applicators. This has allowed for efficient use of limited funds where the rangers can treat small isolated populations of high priority invasive species in the course of their other duties.



Kalamalka Lake Park

Using rangers that are familiar with the invasive plant sites within protected areas is also logistically simpler when compared to working with a contractor that might be unfamiliar with the area, terrain or plants.

For example, in the South Okanagan one ranger was able to treat priority invasive plant sites while doing species at risk inventory as well as range and unauthorized motor vehicle compliance monitoring. In the North Okanagan, another ranger was able to support the volunteer efforts of the Friends of Kalamalka Lake Provincial Park (FKLPP) in their ongoing efforts

to contain scotch thistle. Without the ranger's support through pesticide treatment, the continued commitment of the FKLPP would have been more challenging to facilitate.

Shared Stewardship

BC Parks offers numerous ways for individuals, community groups, organizations and corporations to support the provincial protected areas system. Contributions made through volunteering, partnerships and donations enhance the protection and management of the province's protected areas system.

Individuals, community groups, organizations and corporations across the province volunteer their time, energy and resources to a wide range of activities, from trail building, maintenance, and infrastructure improvements to ecological monitoring and research, restoration projects and interpretive programming. In addition to volunteer opportunities, partnerships are encouraged with universities, non-profit organizations, businesses and community groups with a shared interest in stewarding protected areas. BC Parks also welcomes contributions from individuals, corporations, and the non-profit sector to acquire and protect more land and works very closely with Park Facility Operators and First Nations in the management of protected areas.

Volunteers

Every year thousands of dedicated volunteers contribute time, energy and expertise to BC Parks.

The goal of the Volunteer Strategy is to strengthen capacity within the BC Parks system of protected areas and to create a lasting natural legacy by improving the volunteer experience. BC Parks aims to do this by:

- developing a consistent and sustainable volunteer program;
- ensuring that volunteers are actively engaged as part of core business; and,
- building public awareness, enthusiasm and commitment for volunteering in British Columbia's protected areas.

Implementation of the BC Parks Volunteer Strategy began in 2012 with several significant improvements to the BC Parks Volunteer Program, including:

- launching new Partnership Agreements for volunteer groups that offer Commercial General Liability and Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance;
- reinstating the annual external awards program to recognize volunteers; and,
- building staff and volunteer capacity through development of toolkits to support the new Partnership Agreements.

Support for Volunteer Projects

In 2013/14, BC Parks invested over $240,000 from the Park Enhancement Fund to support community and volunteer projects across the province. Funding was distributed equally between projects that promote the conservation and recreation aspects of protected areas and supported a mosaic of individual projects. Community engagement, project impact, and additional funds leveraged are the successful themes of this initiative.

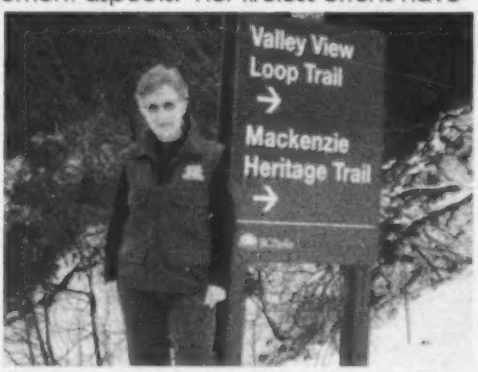
Volunteer Program Highlights for 2012/13	
Park Enhancement Fund Investment	$240,000
Total Value of Projects (i.e., leveraged resources)	$445,000+
Number of Citizens Reached	14,872+
Number of Volunteers	1,605+
Number of Volunteer Hours Contributed	12,073+
Community Partners	70+

2013 Volunteer Awards

BC Parks values the contributions that volunteers and other community partners make every year. To recognize outstanding contributions, BC Parks selects recipients for annual achievement awards for people and organizations that go above and beyond. This year, winners received a framed print presented to them at a local awards ceremony hosted by BC Parks regional staff.

2013 Volunteer of the Year— *Joan Sawicki*

Joan has been volunteering in the Bella Coola area provincial parks for over 10 years, making an extraordinary contribution to both operation and management aspects. Her tireless efforts have had far reaching impacts, helping to connect the community to provincial parks.



Joan organizes a local volunteer group to assist BC Parks staff with organizing events, reviewing operational strategies and management plans, trail work, invasive weed management and facility maintenance.

In 2013, Joan developed a local communication strategy to aid BC Parks staff in engaging the local communities. She also wrote articles in the local newspaper highlighting the work BC Parks staff have been doing to repair flood damaged facilities, helped organize a grand opening of the trails and foot bridges, and developed a comprehensive sign inventory for all front country areas.

Joan helped draft the operational manual for the bear viewing station in Tweedsmuir South Park. Joan has assisted with trail work on several front country trails and conducted a firewood harvesting inventory throughout the Atnarko corridor. She also regularly picks up garbage - a seemingly small task with a profound impact.

Joan's work, infused with passion and determination, is demonstrated through better maintained facilities, more efficient operational programs, and outstanding community engagement.

2013 Volunteer Group of the Year—Friends of West Kootenay Parks

Friends of West Kootenay Parks (FWKP) has been a major contributor to fundraising and park stewardship in the Kootenays since 1988. FWKP has been involved with the restoration of historical cabins, replacement of park facilities, funding for major projects, as well as funding and volunteers to run environmental education and interpretation programs at Kokanee Creek Park.

FWKP has a long history of working with parks, enhancing provincial parks and protected areas, and providing environmental education to park users.

Contribution highlights:

- Silver Spray Cabin
- Slocan Chief historic interpretive cabin
- Pilot Bay Lighthouse
- Environmental education and interpretation at the Kokanee Visitor Centre, and;
- Partnered in every major BC Parks outreach initiative in the West Kootenays

2013 Volunteer Legacy Award— Roland Brown

Roland Brown is a legendary volunteer at provincial parks in the Cowichan Valley on Vancouver Island, dedicating over 25 years of energy to parks and the surrounding community. A logger and a naturalist, Roland has touched all corners of the community and is often described as selfless and genuine.

His work can be seen throughout Bright Angel Park where he was instrumental in constructing the trail system, buildings and suspension bridge over the Koksilah River. Every year, he collected garbage from the river in scuba gear.

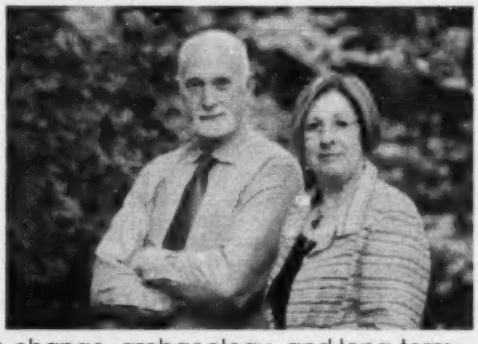
Roland spent decades building and maintaining the Cowichan Valley Footpath in Cowichan River Park, acquiring an intimate knowledge of the trail that he enjoyed sharing with others.

Roland played a role in the long-term success of vulnerable salmon stocks in the area, taking part in restoration projects that fostered a rebound in salmon populations in the Cowichan River, Koksilah River, and Busy-Place Creek. He also spent many hours working to restore the values of Somenos Marsh and Cowichan Bay protected areas.

Roland's work extended far beyond the boundaries of BC Parks. He has previously been recognized for his contributions with a BC Achievement Award.
http://www.bcachievement.com/community/recipient.php?id=7

2013 Community Partner of the Year— Hakai Beach Institute

In 2009, Eric Peterson and Christina Munck purchased and transformed a high-end fishing lodge in Hakai Pass into a non-profit research and educational institute.



The Hakai Beach Institute partners with BC Parks, First Nations and other organizations to make positive contributions to conservation, education and cultural values.

The community-focused institute works closely with BC Parks to provide education and awareness of our natural environment. They have partnered specifically with BC Parks on research related to climate change, archaeology, and long-term ecological monitoring. They also undertake research initiatives within the Hakai Lúxvbálís Conservancy, Koeye Conservancy, Namu Conservancy, Penrose Island Marine Park and Owikeno Conservancy.

The institute works to help enhance our knowledge and protection of conservation lands, and helps to improve our natural environment. Hakai Beach Institute is truly one of a kind in their operations.

Partnerships and Donations

Partnerships are an important way to support and enhance the work we do.

BC Parks has a long history of collaborating with partners and we offer numerous ways for individuals and organizations to support our park system. Partnerhsips have always been, and continue to be, integral to the success of protected area management in BC.

BC Parks partners with a wide variety of individuals, community groups, universities, not-for-profit organizations, First Nations, Park Facility Operators and corporations from across the province. From land acquisition and ecological monitoring initiatives to trail building and infrastructure improvements,these partnerships provide invaluable benefit to BC Parks.

Partners and donors receive official tax receipts for their contributions to our provincial parks system.

The BC Parks' Partnership and Donation Program is designed to provide opportunities for individual citizens, community groups, non-government agencies and private corporations to work with BC Parks on mutually beneficial projects. Through the Park Enhancement Fund, BC Parks supporters can donate to specific projects or parks and receive an official tax receipt for their contribution.

While donation amounts vary significantly from year to year and cannot be predicted with any accuracy, it is clear that BC Parks is a valuable partner, attracting significant donations since the establishment of the Park Enhancement Fund in 2008. Over the last six years, the Park Enhancement Fund has raised over $1 million from donations and community and corporate partnerships. See the table below for figures from the last three years. However, do note that

2011/12 was an exceptional year for contributions, as 2011 was BC Parks' 100th Anniversary, attracting significant support from donors, community groups and corporations alike. It is also important to note that donations for land acquisition initiatives cannot be deposited into PEF and are, thus, not included in the totals below.

Park Enhancement Fund

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Corporate Partnerships & Sponsorships	*$202,000*	*$55,000*	*$84,163*
Community Partnerships	*$95,718*	*$25,280*	*$29,350*
Donations & Commemorative Gifting	*$255,891*	*$193,492*	*$147,406*
Other (i.e., merchandise)	*$1,643*	*$2,690*	*$230*
Total partnership contributions to the Park Enhancement Fund	***$555,252***	***$276,462***	***$261,149***

Donations of financial securities are accepted through BC Parks' Planned Giving Program.

For more information on BC Parks' Planned Giving Program, please visit our website: http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/partnerships/planned-giving/.

BC Parks' Planned Giving Program

Over the years, BC Parks has been the recipient of numerous bequests (gifts in wills), most of which have been donations of land through the Federal Ecological Gifts Program. However, in 2012, BC Parks launched a formal Planned Giving Program that provides an option for BC Parks' supporters to donate financial securities to the Park Enhancement Fund as well. Not only do these types of gifts provide tax benefits to the donor, they also allow donors to support specific projects or parks of their choice, while they are still alive.

The Canada Revenue Agency applies significant tax benefits to estates when individuals leave donations (of cash or land) in their wills to organizations permitted to issue official tax receipts. This means less of their estate is taxed and more is left to their chosen beneficiaries.

Planned Giving is a method of supporting registered charities and other qualified donees that enables philanthropic individuals to make larger gifts than they could make from their daily income. Gifts can be specific assets of cash, securities or other property – and can be left to the beneficiary through a bequest, or donated while the donor is still alive.

Planned gifts are referred to as such because they require more planning, negotiation and counsel than other gifts. For example, donations of securities (stocks or bonds) may require the involvement of legal counsel and financial institutions. In addition, leaving a bequest may require counsel from professional estate planners.

During the past year, BC Parks' received two substantial planned gifts. The first was a donation of $50,000 in financial securities to be spent on a trail enhancement project in the Lower Mainland, and the second was a bequest of $750,000 to be spent on land acquisition for marine park purposes. The marine donation was used in the acquisition of an important piece of property, expanding Octopus Islands Park on Quadra Island (see full story on page 6).

Park Facility Operators

Park Facility Operators provide operational services to maintain and enhance the quality of the visitor experience, the condition of the facilities and the ecological values that support British Columbia's protected areas system.

Services were originally provided by Park Facility Operators (PFOs) under individual park operation agreements. In 2003, many parks were grouped or "bundled" to increase efficiency. In 2013/14, 22 PFOs operated 29 bundles of parks—including frontcountry areas of 201 parks in the province. In addition, 50 parks were operated under individual contracts with PFOs (i.e., non-bundled parks).

PFOs are a passionate group of contractors who believe in providing the highest quality of service to ensure all visitors enjoy their outdoor experience. Some of their responsibilities include providing visitors with quality campground and day use services, maintaining and enhancing facilities, and conserving the natural, cultural and recreation values of the protected areas system. They are also dedicated to upholding BC Parks' standards to ensure an efficiently run protected areas system.

*Success Story: 2013 Park Facility Operator of the Year—**Jim Haws and Debra Haas, Summit Lake Park***

Jim Hawes and Debra Haas began operating the much deteriorated Summit Lake Park in the Kootenays in 2009. Jim and Debra restored the facilities to an acceptable standard and initiated an incredible transformation to the visitor experience.

BC Parks has received many comment cards and letters from the public about the service at the park. Satisfaction rates increased and within one year of Jim and Debra taking over operations, visitation increased 40%. Jim and Debra paid attention to every small detail and sought out ways to improve the visitor experience in whatever way they are able, with high standards of honesty, professionalism and integrity. They even put flowers in the outhouses!

Many visitors comment that Summit Lake Park is among the best provincial parks they have stayed in, a standard all PFO's aspire to.

Engaging First Nations

BC Parks engages with First Nations in a variety of ways and through a variety of different initiatives and programs.

BC Parks has negotiated a broad range of collaborative agreements with First Nations which allow greater First Nation participation in the management of British Columbia's protected areas. In addition to BC Parks specific, single agency agreements, BC Parks also contributes to the development and negotiation of broader government agreements, such as strategic engagement, reconciliation and treaty agreements. As long-time leaders in collaborative working models with First Nations, we continue to strive to meet the business needs of our agency, recreational and ecological sustainability and ultimately, goals towards lasting reconciliatory efforts of government.

In 2013/14, across all of our business areas, BC Parks staff were involved in countless practices in which we shared common goals and objectives with First Nations. Collaborative management agreements, as well as collaborating with First Nations in the development of management plans, truly defines how BC Parks and First Nations work together to plan and manage the protected areas within First Nation's traditional territories.

Visitor Experiences

British Columbia's incredible system of protected areas offers experiences as unforgettable and diverse as the province's natural landscapes. Travelling alone or with friends or family, BC Parks has opportunities for visitors of all ages, in all seasons to explore and enjoy—from vehicle-accessible to wilderness camping to group picnicking, boating, and backcountry cabins from fishing and winter sports to wildlife viewing, hiking, cycling and swimming—an adventure awaits everyone.

Overnight Accommodations

Vehicle-accessible frontcountry campgrounds, often surrounded by forested habitat and in close proximity to beaches and trails, provide campers with easy access to a variety of nature and recreation-based activities. Park Facility Operators maintain BC Parks' facilities and services

in many of these campgrounds (and day use areas) and often provide complementary amenities such as equipment rentals, interpretive programs and small concessions. In some locations, visitors arriving by bicycle will find walk-in campsites and boaters needing vessel camping can tie up to mooring buoys or docks. Those looking for an alternative to camping may find yurts – domed tents made of durable canvas with simple, yet comfortable furnishings, available in select frontcountry campgrounds.

Designated group campsites found in many frontcountry parks can accommodate school groups or large gatherings of family and friends (15 people or more) in one site. Facilities vary from shelters to picnic tables, to fire pits and wood burning stoves, to additional services such as barbeques and propane lights.

A variety of backcountry camping opportunities are offered throughout the province. In some locations, facilities such as tent pads, picnic tables and food caches are provided, while other backcountry campsites are in truly wilderness settings without any facilities. Some campsites are accessed by foot, horse, ATV, snowmobile or are in marine environments and accessed by boat. Vessel camping in the backcountry is often found in protected anchorages, with few or no facilities.

Backcountry cabins and huts are found in a variety of environments, often throughout the four seasons, and range from basic shelters to more equipped accommodations. Facilities and services range from sleeping bunks and pit toilets, to kitchens, woodstoves, wash sinks, and propane lights and heat. Visitors seeking a base for hiking, ski touring, climbing, or just enjoying the view can experience the backcountry in rustic comfort.

Day Use Opportunities

Day use activities, either as part of the camping experience, or as a destination event, are plentiful. Waterfront picnic areas provide a variety of beach activities for everyone to enjoy while forested, grassland, and alpine environments offer other day use opportunities ranging from the relaxed to the challenging. Visitors can swim, paddle, or ski while children of all ages can explore tide-pools, climb adventure playgrounds or take part in a nature program with Jerry the Moose. Others may learn to fish, photograph the local flora, or hike one of the many trails designed for every fitness level.

British Columbia's parks and protected areas also offer unique experiences thanks to the natural, cultural and historic features found throughout the province. A visitor can climb the granite cliffs of the Stawamus Chief, horseback ride the Dewdney (heritage) Trail, tour the Nisga'a basalt flows, cycle the Kettle Valley Railway, or scuba-dive with the Emerald Princess in Mermaid Cove, to name just a few adventures.

Visitors preferring not to 'go it on their own' will find a variety of commercial recreation companies operating throughout the province. These authorized adventure tourism specialists guide guests on hiking, cross-country skiing or river-rafting trips, kayak/canoe tours, or big game and fishing excursions.

BC Parks Reservation Service

The Discover Camping ™ Reservation Service provides visitors with some peace of mind when planning their favourite experiences in BC Parks. The reservation service allows campers to book their spot and be assured that a site that meets their needs is waiting for them upon arrival. Discover Camping also allows people to look up campsite features, view pictures and manage their bookings.

The Discover Camping Reservation Service has been in place since 1996. It is managed as a user-pay service so that it is not subsidized by taxpayers. The reservation, change and cancellation charges remain at 1996 pricing.

The objectives of the reservation system are to:

- offer consumers certainty and peace of mind,
- provide fair and consistent access to high demand sites, and
- improve business efficiencies and customer service.

In 2013, the BC Parks Discover Camping Reservation Service offered local, national and international visitors access to campsites in 97 provincial parks, in 109 frontcountry campgrounds. This includes 77 groupsites, 3 yurts, 2 cabins and over 5,100 frontcountry campsites and 2 backcountry wilderness experiences for a total of over 5,200 individual resources on the reservation system.

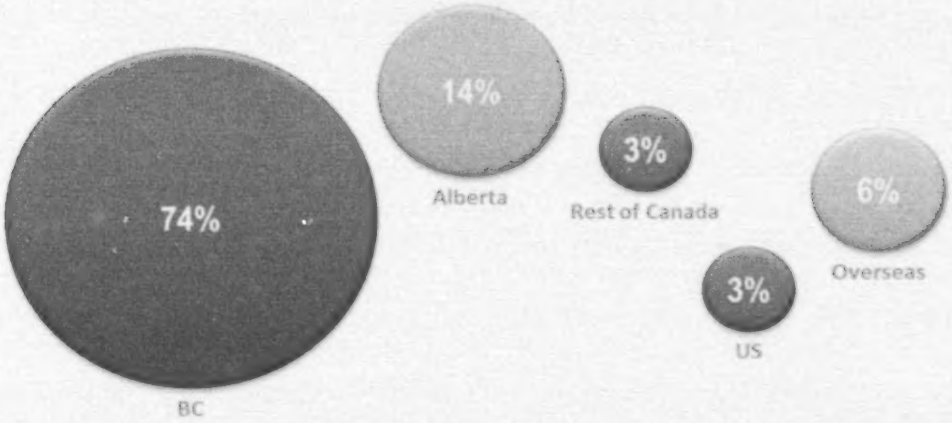
More than 119,000 reservations were made through Discover Camping in 2013 (a 12% increase from the 2012 season). 94% of the reservations were made on the internet, with the remaining 6% made through the call centre. Over 74% of all reservations made in 2013 originated from British Columbia residents.

In recent years, enhancements to the reservation service include:

- the ability to book up to three reservations at one time (shopping cart model);
- the introduction of a new first-come-first-service inventory availability tool;
- improved refund request guidelines and process on BC Parks' website; and
- reminder emails for customers to ensure they had a chance to change or cancel their reservations prior to any penalties applying.

BC Parks continually improves the reservation service by conducting annual reviews, reviewing customer feedback and by increasing the number of campgrounds and sites on the system, where appropriate.

Discover Camping Customer Profile



For more information about BC Parks' reservation service and its policies, please visit: BC Parks Reservation Service or to make a reservation, visit Discover Camping.

BC Parks Backcountry Registration System

In 2011, BC Parks introduced the ability to purchase backcountry permits through the Discover Camping Registration System. There are no service fees to purchase backcountry permits online; it is simply a convenient way to prepay for permits prior to arriving in the park.

In 2013, a total of 2,371 permits were sold through the Discover Camping Registration System in 22 provincial parks: a 13% increase from 2012.

For more information about the backcountry registration site:
http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/registration/

Attendance

Attendance information is used by BC Parks to track visitation trends, assist in evaluation of performance, and guide planning for the operation and management of British Columbia's protected areas system.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Day Use Visits	16,813,262	18,215,709	18,692,209
Camping Visits	2,315,411	2,436,015	2,448,344
Boating Visits	207,454	150,284	166,513
Total Attendance	**19,336,127**	**20,802,008**	**21,307,066**

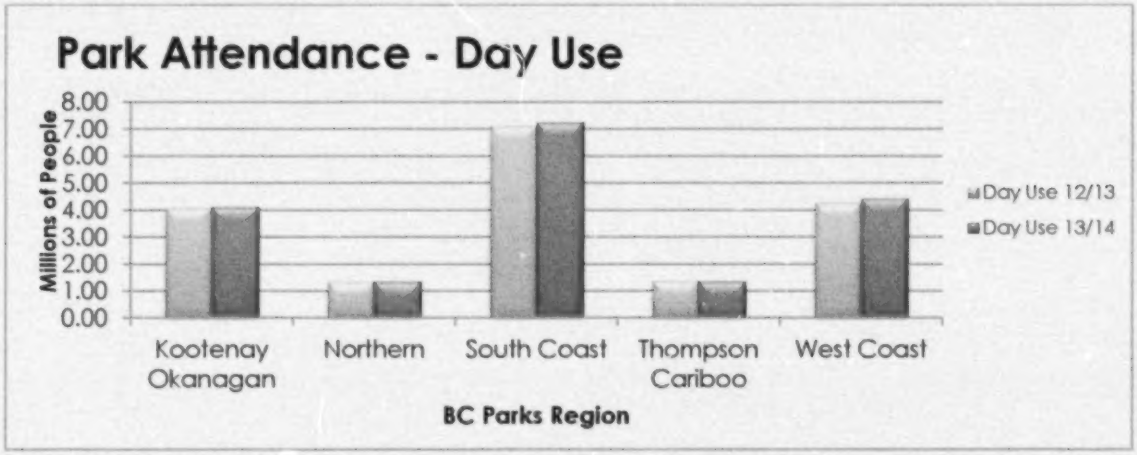
What it means:

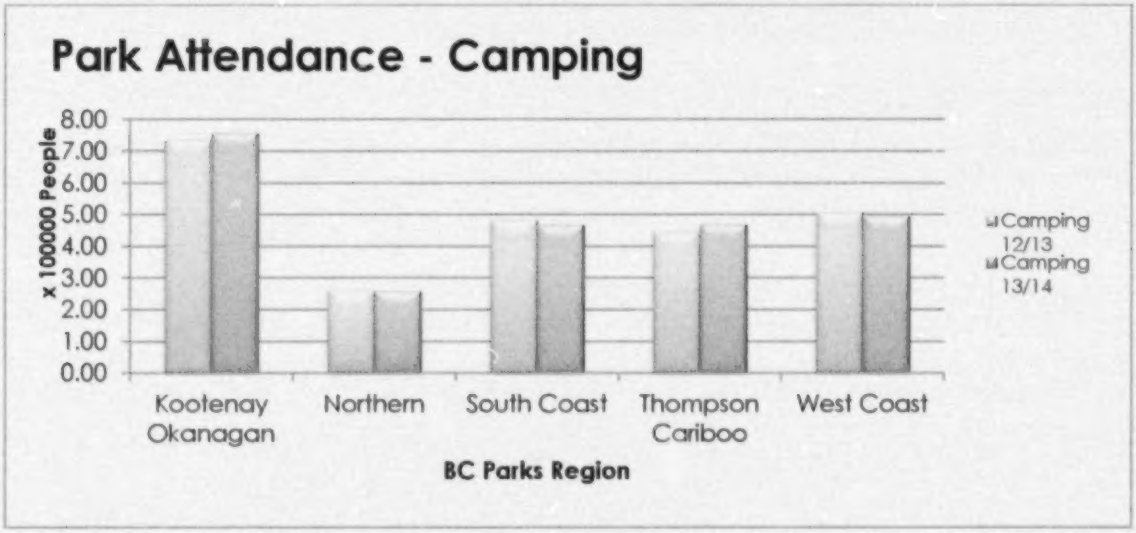
The number of visitors to provincial protected areas is used to measure the contribution of protected areas to the government's priorities of healthy communities, tourism and economic development. Park attendance is affected by the availability and quality of facilities and services, but is also strongly influenced by external factors such as local weather conditions, transportation infrastructure (e.g., highway construction), the value of the Canadian dollar and general tourism trends.

Overall attendance in BC Parks increased for the third consecutive year, a 2.4 percent increase over 2012/13. All five BC Parks regions saw attendance increases, with the South Coast having the biggest increase at 4.3 percent.

How attendance is measured:

BC Parks tracks attendance through campground registrations, trail and traffic counters, and visual counts. In order to have standard, comparable information, all "visits" are stated in person days (so one person staying for two days counts as two "visits"). Average party sizes are applied to daily counts of cars, boats, camping parties, etc., to obtain the number of actual visits. Average party sizes are based on detailed party composition information collected through the annual visitor satisfaction surveys.





Visitor Satisfaction

BC Parks is committed to ensuring visitors have a safe, fun experience in campgrounds with clean, well-run facilities and services.

The BC Parks Visitor Satisfaction Survey assesses client satisfaction with protected areas and campground facilities and services by asking campground and day-use visitors about their experience.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR		2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
	Target:	80	80	80
Percentage of visitors that are satisfied with their visit	Actual:	82	79	80

What it means:

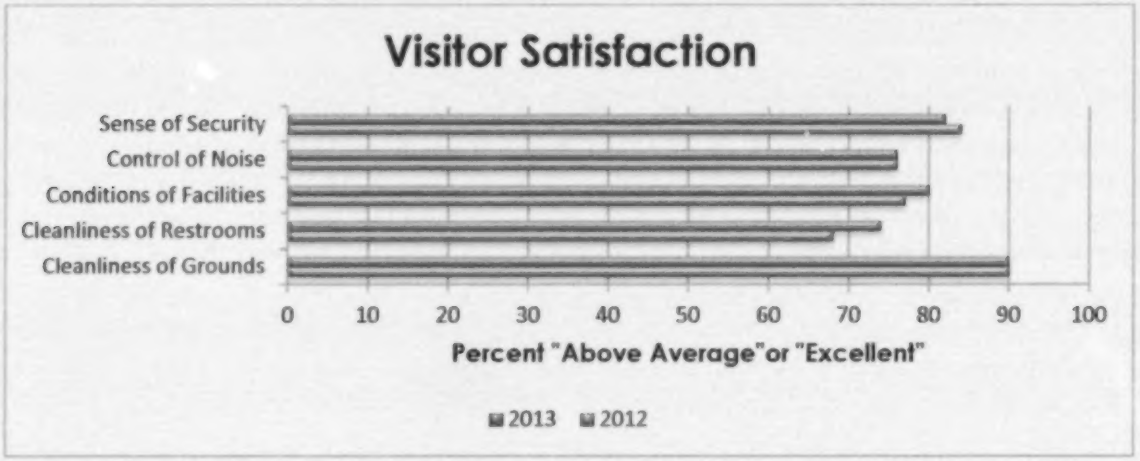
Park Facility Operator performance remains at a high overall level. The overall visitor satisfaction rating in 2013 came in at the target level of 80%, a slight increase from 79% in 2012. Campground visitors remained highly satisfied with the cleanliness of the grounds (90% rated this as excellent or above average), condition of facilities (80%) and sense of security (82%). Control of noise (76%) and cleanliness of restrooms (74%) both came in slightly below the target level of 80%.

BC Parks will continue to work with Park Facility Operators to improve these services and ensure visitors are highly satisfied with their stay in provincial campgrounds.

How Visitor Satisfaction is measured:

About 30 key campgrounds around the province are surveyed each year on a rotational basis. Surveys are undertaken from mid-May to the first week of September. BC Parks overall visitor satisfaction rating is based on an index of visitor responses to five questions about services:

- *cleanliness of restrooms*
- *cleanliness of grounds*
- *sense of security*
- *control of noise*
- *condition of facilities*



Improving Visitor Facilities

BC Parks endeavours to be responsive to the changing interests and demands of a visiting public and to maintain the high satisfaction rating awarded by the visitors.

The objective of the capital investment program is to offer visitors a safe and welcoming environment that reflects the core natural, recreation and cultural values of BC Parks. Funded projects are aimed at attracting families, offering new recreation opportunities, improving accessibility, protecting visitor health and safety, and increasing revenue and attendance.

Over the past five years BC Parks has invested approximately $60 million in facilities across the province. The replacement value of the buildings and land improvements in British Columbia's protected areas system is approximately $700 million.

Projects completed in 2013/14 include:

Kikomun Creek	$324,000	Toilet/Shower Building refurbishment and upgrade
McDonald Creek	$221,000	Campground reconstruction and expansion
Moyie Lake	$121,000	Gatehouse replacement
Wasa Lake	$563,801	Toilet/Shower Building refurbishment and upgrade
Mabel Lake	$747,000	Campground reconstruction and expansion
Beaumont	$281,000	Campground reconstruction and expansion
Meziadin Lake	$275,000	Campsites electrification
Naikoon	$69,000	Boardwalk upgrade
Chilliwack Lake	$140,000	Parking lot and sanitary facilities for day use area
Bowron Lake	$441,000	Staff cabins replacement
Roderick Haig-Brown	$452,000	Road, bridge and parking lot upgrade
Wells Gray – Mahood	$237,000	Water system upgrade
Cape Scott	$162,000	Park buildings upgrade and replacement

Several other high use provincial parks have seen recent capital investments:

Cultus Lake	$141,000	Furniture replacement
Mount Robson	$303,000	Bridge repairs and replacements
E.C. Manning	$147,000	Backcountry trail upgrade
Goldstream	$265,000	Campground reconstruction and expansion

BC Parks Capital Facilities Program Investments

Capital Facilities Program	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Campground and day use areas	$2,097,800	$7,785,961	$ 6,038,581
Toilet and shower buildings	$2,137,000	$1,695,896	$ 1,400,349
Water and sewer systems	$1,419,500	$1,112,253	$ 1,192,547
Roads and trails	$854,000	$1,608,290	$ 2,250,815
*Other buildings and structures**	$4,385,700	$1,677,942	$ 2,100,809
Total Facilities Capital Expenditures	***$10,894,000***	***$13,880,342***	***$12,983,101***

**Other buildings and structures include picnic shelters, boat launches, viewing platforms, heritage building restorations, etc.*

Success Story: World-class facility for Wasa Lake Park

In August 2013, Wasa Lake Park received a new toilet and shower building. The park previously had only toilet facilities, but due to changing user requirements – including longer stays – park staff responded to a growing need for the additional facilities. The new building provides a central accessible toilet and shower unit for families, a camper's cooking preparation area and wash station for cleaning cooking utensils. The building's interior fixtures and amenities, including access paths, were designed to accessibility standards, making it a user friendly facility.

To reduce the carbon foot print and greenhouse gas emissions, as well as operating costs, the building services included sustainability design. A solar hot water heating system (with propane standby power) provides warm showers and electrical lighting, combined with skylights for energy efficiency reducing energy use and operational and maintenance costs. The new septic field was also designed to maximize function as well as improving the visual landscape viewed from the highway.

Success Story: Ranger's Cabins for Bowron Lake Park

Bowron Lake Park underwent a replacement project for two cabins that had been in service since the 1970's and had exceeded the life expectancy and functionality for their intended uses. Construction projects in remote, pristine locations such as Bowron possess challenges and require insightful planning, coordination and execution by park staff and the contractors. To address the challenges of location, weather, scheduling and delivery by helicopter, the cabin was pre-fabricated prior to being flown to the site and then assembled. The contractor spent approximately 26 days on site, with three separate shifts, involving the demolition of the old structures and assembly of the new cabins. The re-built Pat's Point Cabin is duplex-style and was constructed on the same footprint as the previous structure, minimizing the disturbance to the park's environment. The cabin is shared by Park Ranger staff and the PFO, so the duplex style provides for functionality, as well as separation and privacy between male and female staff. The cabins are designed to accommodate up to seven people in each side, and serve the delivery of program requirements as well as emergency situations. BC Parks sought to integrate sustainable technology to minimize carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions by equipping the buildings with solar energy to power communications and lighting systems, providing a safe, green alternative to propane lanterns. For back-up power, Direct Current (DC) electrical power was installed rather than Alternating Current (AC) electrical power, avoiding costly power inverters and allowing "in house" installation by BC Parks staff.

Public Safety

BC Parks strives to provide high quality and safe recreation opportunities for visitors.

Hazard Trees

The objective of the hazard tree program is to promote the conservation of wildlife trees and associated stand-level biodiversity in a safe and operationally efficient manner.

Forests are an important part of the recreational and inspirational experience offered by BC Parks. As trees age, they may become weakened by forest pests, wildfire, wind, snow or lightning and can pose dangers to visitors. However, these trees also provide valuable habitat for wildlife. Certified assessors can recognize existing and potential wildlife trees, know how to integrate them into protected areas management and are able to distinguish between safe and

hazardous trees. The trees are removed in a way that minimizes the environmental impact to the surrounding habitat.

During 2013/14, BC Parks spent approximately $65,000 to remove trees in 30 parks and protected areas due to an evaluation of safety hazard to visitors in campgrounds, day use areas and along roads and trails.

Fuel Management

Living in or adjacent to forests is highly desirable; however risks from potential wildfires exist in such areas. BC Parks strives to ensure the safety of our neighbours by reducing these risks through prescribed fire and tree removal to thin forests in interface areas.

Prescribed fire is the controlled application of fire to a specific land area to accomplish management objectives, while both reducing forest fuels and restoring the forest's ecological integrity. Fire is a natural process in many ecosystems and is necessary to maintain a healthy forest. Many plants and animals have adapted to fire and some actually depend on it.

In 2013/14, BC Parks treated approximately 325 hectares of protected area lands with prescribed fire in two protected areas: Churn Creek Protected Area and Premier Lake Park. These fires are managed in such a way as to minimize the emission of smoke and maximize the benefits to the site.

Compliance and Enforcement

Park Rangers patrol protected areas across the province, making contact with thousands of visitors each year. In most cases, Park Rangers use education and negotiation to achieve voluntary compliance with protected areas rules and regulations.

In 2013/14, the most common offences under the *Park Act* and Park, Conservancy and Recreation Area Regulation were related to domestic animals (unrestrained or in closed parks), failing to obey signs, guiding without a permit, unauthorized activities (e.g. illegal use of vegetation) and trespass. Park Rangers also enforce other provincial statutes in protected areas such as the *Wildlife Act*, *Motor Vehicle Act*, and the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act*. BC Parks utilizes a combination of approaches (including public relations, warnings, evictions, violation tickets, *Park Act* orders, and court prosecution) and agencies (Park Facility Operators, Conservation Officers, Natural Resource Officers as well as RCMP and local police) to ensure the protection of the public and natural and cultural values contained in the protected areas we manage.

BC Parks staff continued to be actively involved on natural resource sector inter-agency teams during 2013/14. Key partner agencies include the Conservation Officer Service (COS), Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, and the RCMP. Joint compliance and enforcement activities involving BC Parks included campfire ban enforcement, long weekend compliance and enforcement projects and monitoring illegal snowmobiling inside and outside protected areas. As part of on-going inter-agency cooperation, Park Rangers who completed the necessary training were appointed Natural Resource Officers and granted additional authorities in order to increase inter-agency cooperation and efficiencies across the natural

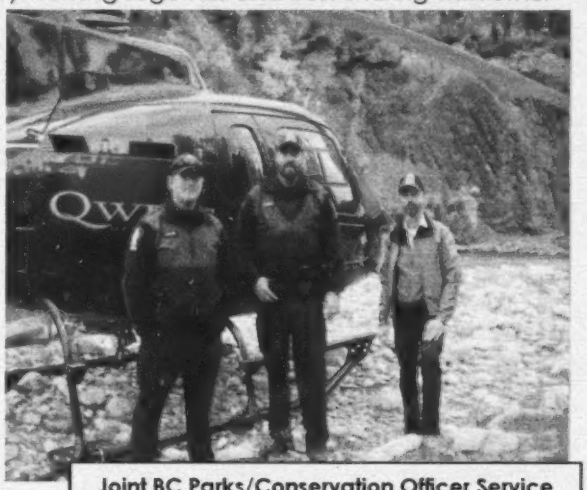
resource sector (e.g. enforcing campfire bans outside of protected areas when travelling to and from the areas BC Parks manages).

Success Story: Northern Rocky Mountains Park Compliance Action Plan

Northern Rocky Mountains Park (NRMP), encompassing 665,709 hectares of wilderness in northeastern BC, is the largest of all the parks in the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area and the third largest provincial park in BC. Due to the vast, remote nature of NRMP, it is difficult, expensive and time consuming to access increasing the potential for illegal activities (e.g. illegal guiding/packing services, trespass structures, hunting violations etc.) to take place.

To mitigate these factors BC Parks implemented a multi-year Compliance Action Plan (CAP) beginning in 2011 to collaborate with the COS and the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations on compliance activities. By working together and cost-sharing with other agencies, BC Parks is able to have a greater presence in the park with increased patrols (i.e flights and jet boat patrols) and additional uniformed staff in the park.

Since the CAP was implemented in NRMP, there have been approximately 45 interactions with the public, resulting in approximately five violations tickets and 10 warning tickets being issued on an annual basis. The CAP has proved very successful in addressing illegal activities in the park and significant positive feedback has been received from the public and stakeholders such as permitted guide-outfitters and transporters as well as the Muskwa-Kechika Management Board.



Joint BC Parks/Conservation Officer Service patrol on the Upper Tetsa River

Engaging the Public

Community Engagement

In the context of rapidly changing demographics and increasingly diverse communities across the province, BC Parks aims to stay relevant and connect with the public in meaningful ways. Throughout 2013/14, BC Parks was involved with community partnerships, youth engagement initiatives and public events.

Youth Engagement

Inspiring the next generation of British Columbia's protected area users.

Get Outside BC is a collaborative youth leadership project that aims to strengthen youth attachment to British Columbia's protected areas by empowering young leaders across the province. The project is a partnership between BC Parks, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness

Society–BC Chapter (CPAWS-BC), Mountain Equipment Co-op, and the Child and Nature Alliance of Canada.

The purpose of the project is to connect youth to the outdoors in a meaningful and sustainable way by giving them a sense of purpose and the capacity to inspire others to spend more time in the outdoors. The goal of the three-phased project is to provide both a gateway experience for youth engagement with British Columbia's wilderness and subsequent opportunities for engagement through youth-led follow-up events and the creation of a supportive youth network of natural leaders. Rather than providing a one-time experience, Get Outside BC aims to provide youth with the tools and resources to develop an enduring connection to the outdoors and a lifelong identity as a natural leader.

Success Story: BC Parks Passport Program

In partnership with the Park Facility Operators, Destination BC Visitor Centres and the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC (Learn to Fish Program), BC Parks successfully completed its third year of the BC Parks Passport Program in 2013. Due to continued customer popularity and excitement, BC Parks launched the program for another two years (2014 & 2015).

Participants, while visiting a provincial park or Visitor Centre, receive a high quality BC Parks Passport in order to collect stickers/stamps and receive special prizes. In 2013 alone, approximately 15,000 passports and 3,000 collectible pins were shipped out to the over 200 participating sites. The passport encourages exploration of BC Parks and Visitor Centres, and participation in Learn to Fish programs by offering this fun incentive program. The passport also contains trip planning and other useful information about BC Parks programs and services and receives sponsorship support from the Camping and RVing BC Coalition and British Columbia Magazine.

Camping and RVing BC Coalition

As a long-term partner of the Camping and RVing BC Coalition, BC Parks continues to contribute to and derive benefit from the coordination of marketing initiatives in this important sector. BC Parks' membership in the coalition allows for leveraged resources in marketing provincial parks and supporting BC Parks' programs. Current members of the non-profit coalition include: BC Parks, the British Columbia Lodging and Campgrounds Association, Destination BC, Recreation Sites and Trails BC, RV Rental Association of Canada, Northern BC Tourism Association, RV Dealers Association of BC, the BC Society of Park Facility Operators, Parks Canada and Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC.

In 2013, some notable achievements of the coalition included a significant website refresh of imagery, content and design resulting in an increase of 60% visitation and statistics showing improved site navigation. A social media campaign increasing followers in all of the coalition's platforms – Facebook, Twitter, You Tube and the newly launched Pinterest account. The coalition supported guest bloggers, media tours, e-newsletters and news releases contributing to media circulation of 1.5 million and an advertising value of more than $15,000.

Learn to Fish Program in BC Parks

The Learn to Fish program, run by the non-profit Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC (FFSBC), is a free program designed to attract new anglers to recreational fishing, particularly youth and their families. The program has a strong focus on conservation and increasing environmental awareness. The Learn to Fish program started in BC Parks in 2006 and has expanded every year since.

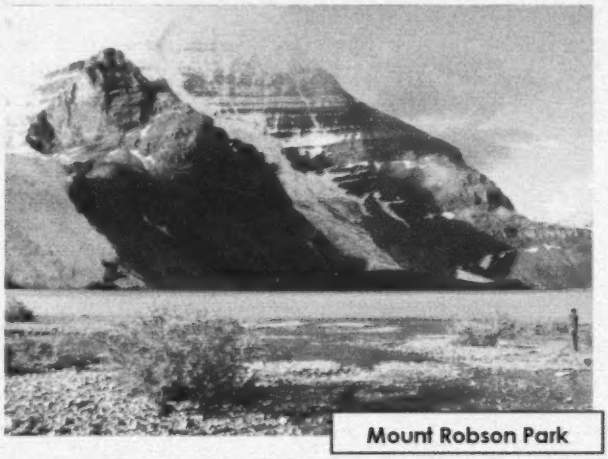
Learn to Fish program at Kennedy Lake Park

In 2013 FFSBC, in partnership with Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Columbia Basin Trust Fund, the Province of BC, and BC Parks, delivered the Learn to Fish program to 2,599 youth and their families with over 80 sessions in BC Parks. With a $5,000 contribution from BC Parks, FFSBC was able to expand the Learn to Fish program in seven additional provincial parks; two on Vancouver Island, two in Kamloops, two in the Okanagan, and one in the East Kootenay.

The partnership between BC Parks and the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC not only teaches youth and their families how to fish and the importance of conservation measures but it also provides a great recreational opportunity in British Columbia's parks.

Mount Robson Park – 100th Anniversary

In 2013, Mount Robson Park celebrated 100 years since it was designated as a park. It was established March 1, 1913 to protect the highest peak (3,954m or 12,972 ft) in the Canadian Rockies and the magnificent headwaters of the Fraser River. Approximately 60,000 visitors ventured to the park last year to enjoy the majesty of the park and join in the centennial celebration.



Mount Robson Park

BC Parks Website

The BC Parks website continues to be one of the most popular websites within the British Columbia government.

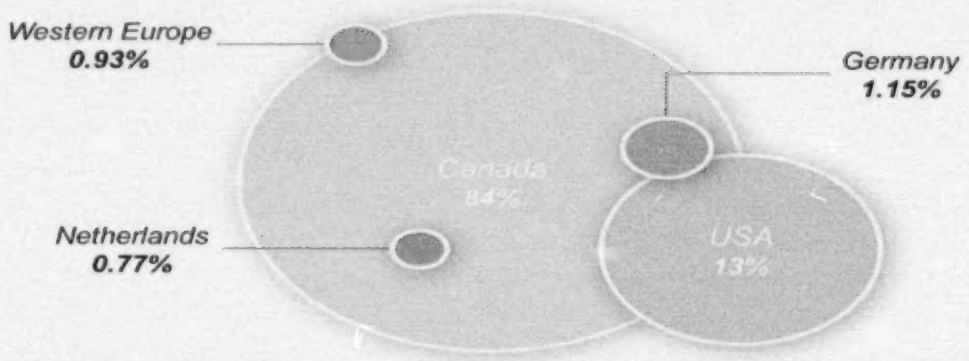
The website provides real time information about protected areas and serves as an essential communication tool for BC Parks and an information focal point for the public, including:

- vital public health and safety messaging (campfire bans/protected area closures, flood alerts, wildlife issues, avalanche alerts, protected area related health alerts);
- policy and user information for the Discover Camping reservation service and links to the service;
- protected area information (fees, location maps, activities/facilities available, opening/closing dates and campsite reservability dates);
- opportunities for public review and comment on draft management plans and boundary adjustment processes;
- conservation information (natural and cultural values);
- volunteers (volunteer opportunities/initiatives, stories and interactive blog);
- opportunities to support British Columbia's protected areas system through partnerships and sponsorship; and
- events calendar and links to public initiatives and promotional programs.

In 2013/14, the BC Parks website had an average of over 9,500 visits each day and the average visitor spends more than seven minutes on the website.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
*Number of unique visits to BC Parks website**	*2,629,187*	*2,960,028*	*3,471,857*
Average visits per day	*6,647*	*8,109*	*9,511*

2013/14 Visits to BC Parks Website by Country



What it means:

Use of the website grew by over 17 percent from 2012/2013 to 2013/2014 with almost 3.5 million visits to the website. Although the majority of visitors to the website are from within Canada, a significant number are from the United States and other international destinations.

BC Parks Facebook Site

BC Parks has a prominent social media presence with its Facebook site. Through Facebook, BC Parks is engaging the public, other protected areas agencies, park-friendly businesses and organizations by sharing photographs, stories, news about protected areas, and events happening in or around British Columbia's protected areas system.

How it's measured:

Each unique visit represents one person with a unique address coming to the website. The number of "hits" is often quoted as a web statistic but this is inflated by the number of pages that the visitor clicks (so one visit can involve 10 or more hits).

Launched in 2011, public interaction with the BC Parks Facebook site has been overwhelmingly positive, with visitors, staff and other community members posting comments, photos, stories and engaging with each other and BC Parks. As of March, 2014, there are over 5,500 people who have 'liked' the site.

Posting on Facebook is an easy and expedient way to get the word out about upcoming events; for example, a posting to publicize a geocaching event held at Mount Robson Park was viewed by over 3,000 people within a few months.

Economic and Financial Benefits

Revenues and Operating Expenditures

The parks and protected areas system is the single largest recreation operation in the province: it provides an extensive variety of recreation, commercial and research opportunities.

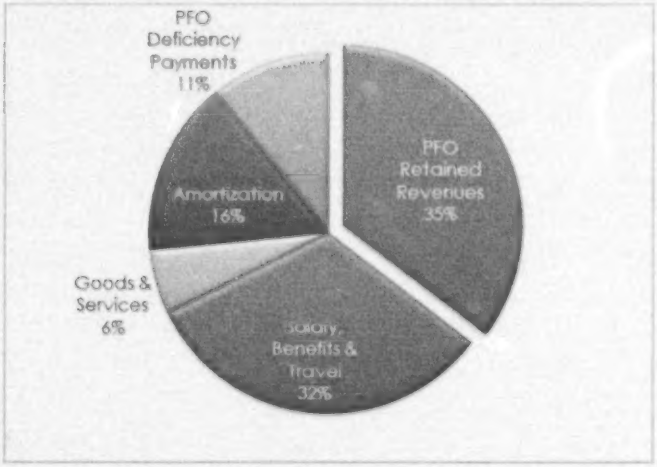
In 2013/14, camping, day use and boating fees (recreation user fees) generated approximately $17.1 million in revenue. Another $1.6 million was collected from fees for activities requiring park use permits. Almost all the recreation user fee revenue is retained by Park Facility Operators to help offset operating and contract costs. All of the park use permit revenue is paid into the general consolidated revenue fund, as is approximately $130,000 from the recreation user activities.

BC Parks

Revenues & Operating Expenditures 2013/14

BC Parks' Operating Budget (vote): ***$31.0M***

Total Operating Expenditures (vote plus retained revenue): ***$47.9M***



BC Parks Revenues (*in millions*)

Type of Fee	Total		Retained by PFOs		Paid to Crown	
	2012/13	2013/14	2012/13	2013/14	2012/13	2013/14
Recreation User Fees	$16.1	$17.1	$16.0	$16.9	$0.1	$0.1
Permit Fees	$1.4	$1.6	$0	$0	$1.4	$1.6
Totals	**$17.0**	**$17.7**	**$15.0**	**$16.0**	**$2.0**	**$1.7**

Notes:

- All fees paid for the right to use protected areas (park use permit fees) are paid into government's consolidated revenue fund.
- Some recreation user fees are also paid into government's consolidated revenue fund. These include: excess camping fees from profitable operations and miscellaneous revenues such as Maquinna Hotspring user fees and some backcountry fees.
- PFOs=Park Facility Operators.
- PFO Deficiency Payments are public funds provided to Park Facility Operators to cover the portion of operating costs that exceed revenues generated from recreation user fees.

Park Use Permits

Park use permits are used to manage various types of commercial, land use and research activities that take place in British Columbia's protected areas system, and ensure that these activities conform to park and protected area values.

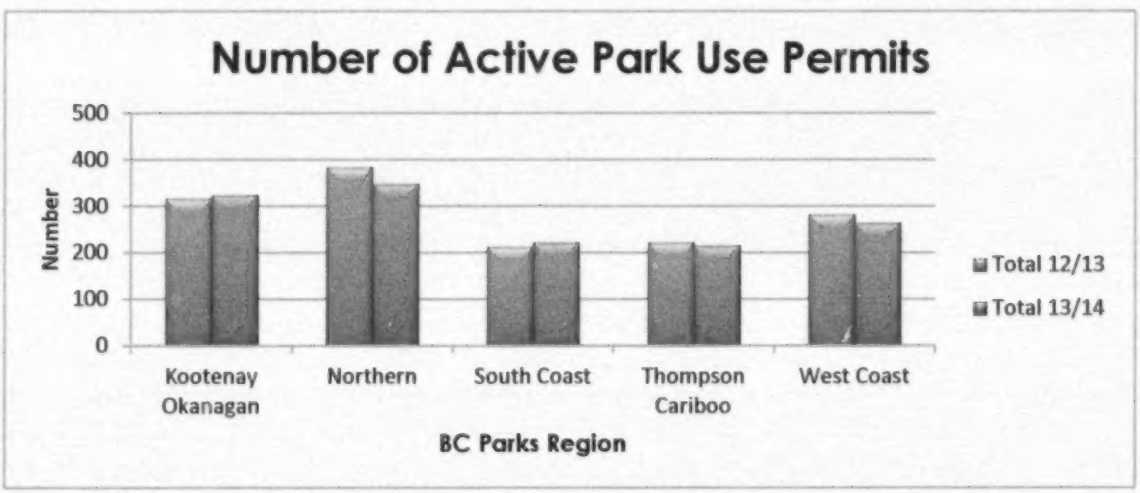
In 2013/14, BC Parks managed approximately 1,378 permits (compared to 1423 permits in 2012/13) covering a wide variety of purposes including commercial recreation, filming, communication sites and research activities. Total park use permit revenues were $1.6 million, a 14 percent increase over 2012/13 revenues.

Active Park Use Permits

Permit Type	2012/13	2013/14
Commercial Services	507	520
Land Use Occupancy	520	519
Ecological Reserve	30	29
Trapline	141	108
Film	37	47
Research	133	135
Other	55	20
Total	**1,423**	**1,378**

Notes:

- Numbers do not include Park Facility Operators.
- Commercial Services includes recreational, big game, angle guiding and associated structures, transportation, special events and accommodation.
- Land Use/Occupancy includes structures, utilities, roads, etc.



Economic Benefits

British Columbia's parks and protected areas generate significant economic benefits for the province by supporting tourism, providing jobs, improving and maintaining population health, and generating tax revenue for government. They also provide affordable vacation options for families.

Spending on park programs by BC Parks and park visitors has a substantial and ongoing impact on the provincial economy. Investment in the parks and protected areas system creates jobs, generates income for local businesses and produces tax revenue for the government. Each dollar invested in the protected areas system by BC Parks and PFOs generates about $8.42 in visitor spending on food, entertainment, transportation and other goods and services, according to the 2011 publication released by the Canadian Parks Council: *The Economic Impact of Canada's National, Provincial and Territorial Parks in 2009* .

Local, inter-provincial, and international visitors are drawn to the many spectacular places that are managed and protected by BC Parks. Approximately 24% of BC Parks visitors are non-residents, making BC Parks comparable to a provincial exporting industry. Particularly when non-residents are visiting parks in remote areas, their expenditures in these areas bring significant economic benefit and development to the surrounding communities.

BC Parks also contributes significantly to population health. The conservation of ecosystem biodiversity results in air and water purification and regulation of floods and climate, all contributors to population health. BC Parks also provides opportunities for accessible outdoors activities. Nature-related recreation is recognized as an important factor in maintaining population health. In these ways, BC Parks contributes to decreasing the impact on the provincial health budget.

As one of the largest providers of overnight accommodation in the province, BC's provincial parks system provides families with more affordable vacationing options relative to hotels, and the revenues from vacationing in BC Parks are kept within the province.

For more information on BC Parks and the protected areas system including information in this report, visit the BC Parks website.